

TO THE  
**BARNARD CASTLE LOCAL BOARD OF HEALTH.**

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**Annual Report, 1893.**

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GENTLEMEN,

I.

During the course of the year 1893, there occurred within the area of the Barnard Castle Local Board of Health, 112 deaths, the largest number ever recorded since the year 1879. But out of this number of deaths, 14 were of persons belonging to other districts, and only brought for treatment in the Teesdale Union Workhouse Infirmary. Thus the total number must be reduced to 98, producing a true annual rate of mortality of 22·57 per 1,000 of population as per census, 1891.

As the general death-rate was considerably higher during the past year, so was also the Infantile Mortality, the number of deaths under five years of age reaching the figure of 30, as against 26 during the preceding year. Twenty-one out of this number were infants under one year of age. Out of the 30 deaths only three were ascribed to Bronchial Affections; six were caused by Diarrhœa, and one by Measles, the remainder being all due to Congenital Weakness or other Infantile Diseases.

Thirty-six deaths occurred over 65 years of age, the oldest person being a female aged 87 years. Only five persons exceeded 80 years of life, their average age being 83·6 years.

With reference to Sex, the deaths were distributed amongst 58 Males and 54 Females.

Zymotic or Infectious Diseases accounted for five deaths only, making 4·46 per cent. of total deaths, or 1·12 per 1,000 of population.



The Zymotic Diseases causing death were :—

Typhoid Fever	-	-	-	1 Case
Smallpox	-	-	-	1 „
Erysipelas	-	-	-	1 „
Measles	-	-	-	2 „
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				5 Cases

Diseases of the Respiratory Organs accounted for 21 deaths, of which nine were ascribed to Pulmonary Consumption. Many of the fatal cases of Lung Disease occurred during a severe attack of Influenza, principally amongst old people in the fourth quarter of the year.

During the year, 21 deaths were ascribed to Heart Disease.

116 births were registered during the past twelve months.

## II.

In considering the rate of Sickness, particularly Infectious, during the past twelve months, I must at once say that, nearly all through the year, it has been much in excess of that of the preceding year; especially was it markedly so during the last quarter of the year. It was then that Influenza once more made its appearance with the usual sequelæ—Pneumonia and Bronchitis, these latter proving particularly fatal in persons over 65 years of age. A characteristic feature of the Influenza Epidemic of this year in our district, appeared to be an acute inflammation of the auditory apparatus in most cases of a purulent nature, and in some instances proving fatal by purulent infection of the Brain. In nearly every case the result was temporary or permanent deafness.

In addition to the increased amount of general Sickness, the town was also visited by a great amount of Infectious Disease, which in one instance—that of Measles—assumed the proportions of a mild epidemic.

The following Infectious Diseases occurred in Barnard Castle during the past year :—

Smallpox	-	-	-	7 Cases
Scarlet Fever	-	-	-	11 „
Typhoid Fever	-	-	-	3 „
Continued Fever	-	-	-	1 „
Erysipelas	-	-	-	10 „
Measles	-	-	-	79 „
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Total				111 Cases





The cases of *Smallpox* were all treated in the Workhouse Infectious Hospital, as all the patients were either vagrants or navvies at the Hury Water Works. In the majority of cases they were admitted into the House with the disease already developed. One case of Smallpox proved fatal. By strict measures of isolation and disinfection of any lodging house that the vagrant may have stopped at in the town, the disease was not allowed to spread.

Out of the eleven cases of *Scarlet Fever*, four occurred in the North Eastern County School. Three of them were during the Summer Term, and one during the last quarter of the year. In no case could the source of infection be traced. The remaining seven cases were scattered over the town, the Infection in the first of these latter probably originating from the School through the medium of servants.

Only three cases of *Typhoid* and one of *Continued Fever* were notified to me. All occurred during the latter half of the year, and in distantly separated parts of the town. The first case arose in Thorngate, and was probably due to starvation more than to sanitary defects of the locality. The second case occurred at the North Eastern County School, immediately after the boys returned from their homes, and was, therefore, clearly imported (from Trimdon.) The third case of Typhoid, as well as the case of Continued Fever, occurred at the high part of the town, in a newly-formed locality, and was palpably caused by grave sanitary defects in the privy construction, allowing sewer gas to get into the dwelling-house.

The ten cases of *Erysipelas* occurred scattered all over the area of the town, but were not caused by any sanitary defect.

The seventy-nine cases of *Measles* all occurred during the months of August, September, and October, and were mainly amongst children under eight years of age, the attack thus assuming the proportions of an epidemic amongst this portion of the community. The disease was in the first case imported, and then spread by the reckless exposure of infected and not thoroughly cured children in the elementary schools. Only 79 cases were notified, but the actual number affected far exceeded this, as in the majority of instances no medical man was called in, and the parents utterly neglected to comply with the Infectious Diseases' Notification Act.

Amongst other diseases there was a great prevalence of *Diarrhæa*, especially during the months of June, July, and August, ascribed to the excessive heat, scarcity of water, and dryness of the atmosphere.



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## III.

The sanitary condition of the town was fairly satisfactory during the past twelve months, and that notwithstanding the scarcity of water.

The town was inspected and supervised with the same assiduity as in former years, and everything done to preserve the health of the community. The main sewers received every possible attention in the way of flushing, but I should like now to recommend the Board to take over likewise the supervision of all house drains, and see that these are all flushed four times, or at the least twice in every year, as in many cases disease is generated by some block or defect in this tributary system, more than by a fault in the main sewers.

The Water Supply of the town was pure and abundant, except during the summer months, when, owing to the dryness of the weather, the tributary spring did not yield its usual supply.

All common lodging houses were frequently visited and inspected, especially during the early months of the year, when Smallpox prevailed so much amongst the wandering population of the country.

The slaughter houses were also under strict supervision, but I must say that I do not consider it very sanitary to have many of these establishments scattered all over the town, and I should like to recommend to the Board the advisability of establishing a Town's General Slaughter House, to be under the immediate supervision and management of the Board and its Inspector, and thus do away with all the private slaughter houses.

No action has been called for in connection with offensive trades, Factories, and Workshops.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

**ALFRED H. SEVIER, M.B.,**

Medical Officer of Health.

